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Border

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PRIORITY

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STATE

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TOR: 052236Z MAR 85

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ZNR UUUUU ZOC STATE ZZH
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DE RUEHCV #2130-0642232
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 052232Z MAR 85
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5417
INFO RUESBG/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 8140
BT
UNCLAS CARACAS 02130

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PBTS, PTER, CO, VE
SUBJ: CONFRONTATION NEAR BORDER RESULTS IN DEATHS OF
THREE ELN GUERRILLAS

REF: A) 84 CARACAS 4946, B) 84 CARACAS 10108,
C) CARACAS 1638

1. A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN COLOMBIAN NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY (ELN) GUERRILLAS AND VENEZUELAN SECURITY FORCES ON MARCH 3 IN THE BORDER AREA BETWEEN EL NULA AND LA VICTORIA IN SOUTHWESTERN VENEZUELA RESULTED IN THE DEATHS OF THREE GUERRILLAS AND THE CAPTURE OF TWO OTHERS. THE BRIEF SKIRMISH OCCURRED WHEN A VENEZUELAN SECURITY FORCE COMPOSED OF NATIONAL GUARD, ARMY, JUDICIAL TECHNICAL POLICE (PTJ) AND DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE AND PREVENTIVE SERVICES (DISIP) PERSONNEL, RAN INTO TWO GROUPS OF FIFTEEN COLOMBIAN GUERRILLAS EACH WHILE INVESTIGATING THE PRESENCE OF HEAVILY ARMED STRANGERS IN THE REGION. AFTER THE TWENTY MINUTE SHOOT-OUT, VENEZUELAN AUTHORITIES RECOVERED A LARGE QUANTITY OF ARMS, DOCUMENTS, AND ELN PAMPHLETS WHICH THE FLEEING GUERRILLAS LEFT BEHIND. AUTHORITIES REPORTEDLY IDENTIFIED TWO OF THE DEAD GUERRILLAS AS AMONG THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE KIDNAPPINGS OF TWO VENEZUELAN RANCHERS, JORGE SERRANO REY AND FRANCISCO MOLINA SANCHEZ, WHO HAD BEEN RELEASED AFTER THEIR FAMILIES PAID LARGE RANSOMS (REFTELS).

2. THE PRESS HERE ALSO NOTES THAT A SIMILAR CLASH WITH ELN GUERRILLAS OCCURRED A FEW DAYS EARLIER (FEBRUARY 28) ON THE COLOMBIAN SIDE OF THE BORDER, AT THE TOWN OF SAN VICENTE. THE PRESS CLAIMS THAT THIS CONFRONTATION RESULTED IN THE RECOVERY OF VENEZUELAN WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT THAT THE GUERRILLAS HAD TAKEN DURING AN ATTACK ON A NATIONAL GUARD BORDER OUTPOST AT CUTUFI ABOUT A YEAR AND A HALF AGO.

3. EMBASSY WILL REPORT FURTHER DETAILS AS THEY BECOME AVAILABLE. LANDAU
END OF MESSAGE

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